

INTRODUCTION: ARTICULATING EMPIRE'S UNSTABLE ZONES

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The idea of this collection first arose in the course of a research seminar I conducted at the École Normale Supérieure, Lyon, France, between the spring of 2003 and that of 2006, a seminar which ENS-Éditions very rapidly chose to publish as a book.¹ It then took its final, international form during the conference on 'Unstable Zones: Self and Other in British Narratives of Exploration' which I convened at the ENS in March 2007. The carefully selected, heavily revised essays presented here are not focused on 'travel narratives' as a literary genre or as emblems of a 'tourist' culture, two fields of research which have been substantially dealt with in recent years. Nor do we attempt to define the characteristic features of a genre in relation to other genres – such as the pilgrimage narrative² – or to employ the historian's method of examining the great projects of territorial expansion and the effects of a continued relationship with the foreign. This is a book on *exploration*, and more precisely on *exploration narratives* written by British explorers on their return from 'contact zones', understood here not as predetermined spaces where Self and Other come to meet on fixed grounds, but as 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other'.³

As a consequence, the essays collected in this volume deal mainly with accounts of *first encounters*, focusing on the *pragmatic* aspects of communication between Self and Other, from the medieval and Renaissance period to the late nineteenth century, in North or South America, in Asia as well as in Africa, from the South Pacific to the Antarctic; from Mandeville, Drake and Raleigh to Franklin, Stanley and Burton. The main objective is to scrutinize what has hitherto been ignored; namely, the precise moment of mutual discovery experienced in the field, as recorded by the Western observer, the one participant to the scene supposed to have known how to *write about* this shared experience – a practice traditionally assumed to signal the 'Great Divide' between oral and literate cultures, pre-logical and logical systems of thought, pre-capitalist and capitalist economies, non-ethical and ethical social organizations.⁴ The volume should thus be of particular significance to all those interested in the history of

travel, piracy and exploration, but also to those interested in anthropology, in the sociology of communication, in the production of knowledge systems, and finally those interested in the issues of national or personal identity in the context of the British Empire(s).

Until now, scholarly attention on exploration narratives has been somewhat erratic. Such narratives have been used as a store for collections of 'adventure narratives', as in Benedict Allen's *Faber Book of Exploration*, or Fleming and Merullo's *The Explorer's Eye*. Symptomatically, those two works offer exploration narratives of the twentieth century, focusing either on interstellar space or on the great marine depths, where there can in fact be no surprise of a first encounter, where technology constitutes an obvious screen between Man and the realm he explores, and where a tradition of writing – journals, logs, diaries, travelogues, 'personal narratives', etc. – is lost. Exploration narratives will also often serve as anecdotal supporting evidence for historians⁵ or geographers.⁶ And of course it is certainly the case that we are becoming more and more interested in the history of maps, as is attested by a number of books published by the British Library.⁷

All in all, it seems such works make the issue of 'representation' the sole object of their curiosity. Without ever questioning the possibility that there might have existed other procedures of knowledge-production than the process which Michel Foucault called the 'tableau' – the Enlightenment 'table' as symbol of a reordering of reality performed by penetrating and sage clinical observation – such works take it for granted that the world can indeed not only exhaust itself in visibility and readability, but also divide itself between observer and observed.⁸ Using Edward Saïd's work on 'Orientalism' as a major theoretical reference point, impressive work has been undertaken to analyse how discourse was employed by the West to ensure its superiority over the rest of the world, the representation of difference conceived in terms of 'a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.'⁹ Paradoxically enough, however, it is to be feared that the perspective common to all such approaches has ended up reaffirming the pre-eminence of one of the most potent myths of the West: the explorer's status as an avatar of progress, reason and civilization, a myth which in fact seems not to have gathered full momentum before the mid-nineteenth century.

To be sure, Stanley's late nineteenth-century narratives seem to be anxious to construct an *ethos* – an image of the self projected through discursive practice and personal scenography¹⁰ – of the white explorer's supremacy. But such an *ethos* seems at variance with the more qualified, sometimes even disturbing, public image of themselves some of his nineteenth-century predecessors – Tod, Clapperton and Burton in his pre-African years – had sought to construct. These men belonged to the first half of the nineteenth century, or to the early Victorian period, when the belief in progress seems to have been tempered with a joy in discovery and a largeness in spirit. It is only as the century moved towards

centralization and uniformity, that self-images started to rely more and more on practicality and steadiness, and that the humour, eccentricity and sometimes even theatricality of the early Victorians started to be less acceptable than the often arrogant postures of their followers. Of course – and Darwin's view of life not only as evolution from primitive to civilized state, but also as Godforsaken contextual placing and unpredictable conflict for survival, was no doubt a major source of secret terrors here – one should never overlook the possibility that violent polarization may have been the symptom of a desperate late-nineteenth-century struggle to maintain coherence, a battle against anxiety, division and self-doubt.

Still, we should keep in mind that the protocols of geographical observation and measurement which constitute what we consider to be the traditional tools of the West's scientific outlook were not in fact fully worked out before the second half of the nineteenth century. Highly popular books such as John Herschel's *Manual of Scientific Enquiry* (1849) and Francis Galton's *Art of Travel* (1855), alongside with equally popular tracts and lectures such as E. G. Wakefield's *A View of the Art of Colonization* (1849) and J. R. Seeley's *Expansion of England* (1883), undoubtedly conditioned Western explorers' perception of otherness, and therefore inevitably their conception of intersubjectivity.¹¹ The traveller was then transformed into a professional explorer by a specific rhetoric, which turned the adventurer into both a statutory national hero and an institutionally recognized scientist, a combination of postures which inevitably predetermined the outcome of any encounter by polarizing positions.

This unwilling perpetuation of an after all very recent myth of extreme polarization has had an unforeseen impact on our knowledge of first encounters. Not only is the current work on this topic still predominantly focused on the question of 'representation', but more surprisingly, it is still this question which continues to form the basis of the most recent studies emerging from 'postcolonial' approaches, or 'feminist' ones. Fundamentally, it is always a matter of identifying the secret or implicit 'motivations' *behind* the 'representations' elaborated by both the rhetoric of conquest and that of 'anti-conquest'.¹² And in aiming to unearth the secret behind the 'tableau', one that is always inevitably linked to colonialist violence even under the guise of innocent natural history, the uncertain event of the encounter itself is forgotten. What we propose to do here, on the contrary, is to articulate the links between the formation of multiple imperial narratives, at different historical moments, and the shifting politics of intersubjectivity with which they intersect, by focusing on the actual moment of this 'encounter', a term to be understood henceforth in its Goffmanian sense of an unpredictable 'social situation', a moment when individuals find themselves and the others accessible to the naked senses of one another, required to ratify one another as authorized focuses of attention, but without the guarantee – due

to the unrehearsed nature of the event – that the expected, cultural structuring of conduct will work effectively.¹³ The focus is thus made to bear on the dialectics of proximity and distance between Self and Other, a central concern of eighteenth-century British explorers, as will be established by studies of Wallis's, Cook's and Forster's logs.

If the initial expectations presiding over first encounters may have been constrained by a set of polarities – the colonizer and the colonized looking at each other from the two sides of an unbridgeable gulf, cultural, technological, racial, linguistic and so forth –, and reaffirmed through the production of the explorers' *narratives* addressed to a national community at home, our assumption here is that they must also have been challenged while on the terrain, causing each interlocutor to enter into a dialectics of self-images and status hierarchy, and therefore to experience uncertainty and trouble, on both sides, irrespective of time periods. Differentiating between the writings of first-hand eye-witnesses to Indian culture and the armchair writers of colonization, Karen Kupperman has convincingly argued that the earliest encounters between the English and the Indian societies were in fact characterized by ambivalence and complexity.¹⁴ Indeed, the uncertainty and contingency experienced by those who participated in the early encounters should induce us to surmise that in context, with all the unpredictability of verbal or non-verbal interaction and communicational exchange, knowledge systems must have been challenged, frames of meaning-making disrupted, 'representations' shattered, postures undermined, positions reversed, and identities transformed. When Spivak writes that 'empire messes with identity', she means that empire distorts the identity of the colonized. Perhaps we should contemplate the possibility that the colonizing subject's identity, too, is distorted in the process of encounter.¹⁵ Surely, what took place in first-encounter scenes was less transaction, or translation, than *negotiation*, a process by which 'sides' could no longer be secured: in any genuine process of communicative exchange, very little is in fact left immune, and much may be lost, or gained.

What happens in the field when the performance of self-identity does not function properly in the interactional ritual? The book concentrates on such moments, when the differences the ritual of encounter is supposed to establish or re-establish break down; when misrepresentations prevail over intended representations; when the 'stigmatized' Other manages to efface his or her 'virtual identity' in the eyes of the 'normal' self to assert his or her own 'actual identity';¹⁶ or worse even, when the 'normal' Self's identity suddenly allows itself to be 'contaminated' by the Other's, engaging into mimicry and more or less furtive impersonations of 'barbarians' and 'savages' – as is indeed the case, although with varying amplitude, in the accounts brought back by Drake, Raleigh, Cook

and Burton. Do we have traces of those unstable zones of interaction? Were such encounters recorded, and, most importantly, *how*?

Where, for example, were such scenes *staged*: on board a navigator's ship? On a beach? Inside a primitive hut? Along the road? Alongside a boat caught in ice? In the course of a trekking expedition through a jungle? Or, if one comes to think of Anna Jameson and Georg Forster, during 'rambling' excursions? How did context affect not only the explorers' conception of knowledge and self-identity, but also the very nature and structure of their reports? Were dialogues recorded? Using direct or reported speech? Through which procedures of accommodation or domestication – quoting, translating, naming, renaming – was the Other's speech allowed to be articulated? What were the perspectives adopted? Through whose eyes were shock, wonder, admiration, awe, recorded? How were such experiences dramatized, narrativized and even fictionalized in the explorers' subsequent accounts? For example, what happens to the myth of the 'noble savage' when Hawkesworth processes Cook's logbook to adapt it to the expectations of a British nationalist audience? What takes place between Wallis's first log and his second one? When on board the same ship one officer records his experience from the safety of his cabin while another feels free to go ashore and venture into unknown territory, both geographical and social? When one happens to be a *woman* explorer? A botanist? An artist? A Scotsman, a Welshman, an Irishman? A Catholic? A Protestant? A British exile hired by an American newspaper? And what does it tell us, not only about the varied processes of 'othering' the not-Self, but also about self-fashioning? Discovery narratives as anthropology, but also, most importantly, as autobiography: portrayals of a fantasized Other as much as narratives of an 'imagined' Self – personal, communal, national.¹⁷

It will come as no surprise that after Erving Goffman's redefinition of encounter as interaction and performance, Johannes Fabian's indictment of anthropology's denial of simultaneity – what Fabian calls the anthropologist's 'allochronism'¹⁸ – became of central importance to the colleagues who attended the Lyon seminar and the ensuing international conference: had Western culture always been so successful in refusing to occupy the same temporal space as its observed object of knowledge? Had the explorer and the explored engaged in face-to-face encounter never managed to live 'in the same Time'? What use, then, had been indigenous guides, translators and interpreters? We began to perceive the relevance for our purpose of studies examining the perils of the translation of linguistic and cultural 'alterity',¹⁹ and in fact the perils of any 'discourse of the other' – what Certeau calls 'heterology'.²⁰ But, precisely, had explorers' reports been necessarily and inevitably 'heterological'? Our central question became the following: if a social role requires validation by other social participants, did it really never happen that instead of presenting themselves unfavourably and fully cooperating in the expected manner, the non-Westerners refused their inferior

status and articulated not necessarily violent claims to full-fledged humanity? Clapperton's anecdote of a pantomime parodying colonial practices, staged by the Africans to entertain their European visitors, should definitely alert us to this possibility. In Certeau's words, did it never happen, then, that the Other's 'inscribable' body did not fully comply with the heterologist's conquering written word? That the Other's reluctant body resisted the cultural patterns of the visitor, and even spoke out? Was the Other always bound to be the dead corpus of the ethnographer? Or did this muted Other's corpse manage to resist objectification, resurrect from the table, and become a haunting presence, preventing both the explorer and the explored from resting in peace? 'Who's there?', Shakespeare's Barnardo famously asks before Hamlet's story even begins to unravel. Who was there, at the exact moment of the first encounter, and even in the immediate aftermath of contact, when Self and Other had to be couched in writing?

This is not another book on British imperialism, on its ideological assumptions, its procedures and practices. What we deal with here is the history of the construction of a British identity 'in context', which is to say as an *intersubjective* linguistic event occurring on a specific terrain.²¹ We examine this uncertain space where Self faces Other, where the two are wrenched from their allotted fixed places and thrown together on a stage to be shared as ego and alter ego. We argue by the same token that this staging is not necessarily based upon the traditional agonistic model of colonial combat or trauma, that foreign travel itself, from the Middle Ages to the late nineteenth century, may have come 'perilously close to subversiveness',²² that, even before the eighteenth-century British rejection of the Catholic model of 'Conquest' in favour of the more democratic, Protestant model of peaceful transaction and negotiation²³ – of which Cook was indeed the emblem, 'an Orpheus-like hero exemplifying the highest British values of peaceful exploration and enlightened cultural contact'²⁴ – the Renaissance discourse of 'wonder' may have demonstrated the contextual relativity of difference.²⁵ What we suggest is that the great ethnologists of the twentieth century, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown or Evans-Pritchard, may have had very early timid predecessors, who certainly realized that there was no knowing the Other outside a *cultural dialectic*, and did not hesitate therefore to transform the monologic, 'allochronic' discourse of the Western outsider into a dialogic, polyphonic one. If the Protestant ethics of negotiation effectively prevailed, successful commercial relationships implied that exchange be beneficial to *both* sides, thus allowing for the possibility not only of a shared ground of mutual understanding, but also of a potentially unpredictable communicational dialectics.

Perhaps there was an even deeper specificity to British narratives in that they were all written . . . in English. As Anthony Burgess and Peter Ackroyd have claimed, the English language itself seems to have been an extraordinary vehicle for alterity, rich enough *in itself* to accommodate otherness, created in such a

way that it originally presented all the attributes of a 'melting pot', on the model of Drake's ship, precisely: 'The language itself was a melting pot – not fixed and elegant and controlled by academics, but coarsely rich and ready for any adventures that would make it richer. English was a sort of Golden Hind.'²⁶ Was such linguistic disposition why Raleigh's tale easily fitted into an 'indigenous cultural praxis', recuperating myths of Indian origin and giving over to homophonic language play even in a foreign tongue?²⁷ Should we here perceive the first step towards a linguistic transformation of the British outsider into an *insider*, the secret of a profound cultural kinship between, say, Raleigh and Burton? As will often appear in the essays collected in this volume, alterity in British exploration narratives is effectively encountered, pragmatically experienced and linguistically tested, so that the representational crisis enacted is also a self-representational crisis.

Still, the stage of this crisis was brought to us by narratives, 'narrativization' being assumed to be integral to all cognitive procedures.²⁸ The essays thus focus on scenes of hesitation, disquiet, trouble, not as those scenes actually happened – a truth for ever irretrievable – but as they were *recorded* and *related* in writing, mediated through a particular rhetoric. David Amigoni's comments on Alfred Russel Wallace's *The Malay Archipelago* (1894) may be illuminating here. He notes that when Wallace entered a Dyak village in Borneo and was stared at as if he had been some strange animal, thus 'swap[ping] roles to become one of the creatures [an orang-utan] that in other circumstances he ha[d] hunted and observed', this post-Darwinian blurring of the frontier between Self and Other was made conspicuous through Wallace's *fictional* devices. Everything happens, Amigoni remarks, as if there were some kind of correlation between breaking down the species barrier and collapsing the partitioning between natural historical and fictional writing.²⁹ If scientific revolutions come about through a change of metaphor of the world,³⁰ how could the Westerner's frames of perception and patterns of meaning concerning his or her Other be redefined without similar rhetorical upheavals? But how, then, are we to reconcile this inescapability of metaphorical redescription with the traditional aspiration of the exploration narrative to an absence of style, to a form of writing anxious to present the bare facts in all their freshness, without the mediation of the perverted figures of metaphor and comparison?³¹

At the end of the eighteenth century, Mungo Park's aim was indeed to offer his reader 'a plain, unvarnished tale' of his African adventures.³² But since we may feel entitled to suspect that Park was in fact quoting less from the dictates of the Royal Society than from Shakespeare's *Othello* ('I will a round unvarnish'd tale deliver / Of my whole course of love')³³, to what extent should we trust the tale's vow of transparency and believe in the explorer's presence to himself? Narratives may even be of a more intimate stuff and betray secret, personal fantasies. When

he arrived at the entry to the long-sought Northwest Passage in 1818, John Ross really saw a wide range of mountains blocking the view across Lancaster Sound, which he described and even charted, while all his men, sailors and officers alike, assured him that in place of the 'Croker Mountains' there seemed indeed to be a passage.³⁴ Very often, the material conditions of exploration were enough in themselves to distort perception. Like Livingstone, most explorers 'returned to England emaciated shells of their former selves,'³⁵ in a state of what Fabian has called 'ecstasis', having had to endure privation, exhaustion or fevers, and to consume alcohol or opiates to alleviate their sufferings, which, worked together, greatly undermined their sense of objectivity and rationality, while paradoxically furnishing a ground for cross-cultural understanding.³⁶

Even if we admit the possibility that British explorers remained unaffected by illnesses or hallucinations and retained intact their ability to carry out the scientific tasks they had been assigned, does not the very vindication of 'scientific' or 'realist' objectivity betray an 'imperialist' rhetoric used to produce *effects* of scientificity, and therefore effects of authority or superiority? The very ideal of a transparent discourse, untarnished by the tropes of a given culture, paradoxically evokes the biblical myth of an original, pre-Babel form of communication. The most apparently neutral description by Cook of a trunk or of an unknown foliage observed on a Pacific island – 'some kind of leaves'³⁷ – implies a referent from which implicit comparisons can be made by the intended reader at home. When Mary Kingsley perceives the African mangrove as a metaphor for the origin of the world,³⁸ does she not also reactivate the myth of undifferentiated chaos before divine intervention – a topos Stanley would later merge with that of the providential arrival of the white colonizer? British explorers could never undo their own inherited rhetoric, for without their idiosyncratic vision of the world, the interpretative work would simply have been a sheer impossibility. There never was a 'new world'. The world the explorers discovered and described was always already constrained and therefore constructed by 'discourses', fantasies, knowledge systems, cultural structures of meaning-making, including the myths and other narratives which make up a national community and ensure that the message is effectively *received* by those who have stayed at home.

The articles in this volume strive to establish the way in which each explorer, in the historical and cultural context to which he or she belonged, strove to reconcile the shock of the unknown and the recognition of the familiar, the new gaze and the inherited discourse, the naked surprise and the cultural filter, in his or her own particular style. This may result in tensions, even internal dissensions; this may also produce disturbing effects. For example, although they shared the same Enlightenment culture and explored the same regions at approximately the same time, Hearne and Mackenzie had widely diverging interpretations of what empiricism induced them to do at a practical level. And when Darwin invites his

contemporaries to understand the unknown through the known,³⁹ doesn't this porous interchange between the civilized and the primitive produce a rhetoric which is already accepting the necessity of a *hybridity* of scientific thought? If we accept this fundamental premise that all narratives of first encounters were written at this juncture between an inherited national 'culture' ('best seen ... as a set of control mechanisms ... for the governing of behavior')⁴⁰ and a revolutionary cognitive or hermeneutic event demanding *personal* adaptation to the new situation, several other questions emerge.

One may wonder whether the historically-determined metaphors of the interpretative schema which produced and guaranteed the effectiveness of knowledge in a specific cultural context were systematically inscribed in the exploration narratives of the same period. Did this 'ideological' structuring of knowledge differ fundamentally according to whether the exploration and encounter occurred in the sixteenth or in the nineteenth century? For instance, did commerce or profit, which motivated the expeditions of Drake and Raleigh supply the Protestant English, then British explorers with the first and most prevalent of metaphorical filters in everything relating to non-violent, peaceful exchange? This would indeed seem to be the case of Clapperton's and Stanley's nineteenth-century visions of Africa. But even so, were the *situations* of dialogue conceived in the same terms? Were the general procedures which determined the pragmatic effectiveness of such scenes identical? What were the various *signs* – verbal and non-verbal: gestures, rituals, dumb shows, pantomimes, even silences – which the individual explorers thought worth recording? Can we sketch a history of first exchanges, and of the way they were mediated in narrative? For example, can we safely claim that communication between Self and Other gradually transformed from misunderstanding or disdain, to comprehension, then to mutual enrichment and finally to postcolonial hybridity and postmodern disillusionment (one would think here of Bruce Chatwin's *In Patagonia*): Or should we, rather, speak of individual postures, dictated to the explorers by specific contexts, through the circumstances these individuals sometimes unexpectedly found themselves in? Perhaps we should then also accept the possibility that we need to distinguish between several *successive* postures in the same historical context, and even within the same explorer. Should we not, for example, distinguish between the Franklin of the beginning of his mission and the Franklin who realizes that the hierarchical relation linking the civilized to the primitive is crumbling down and is even being inverted? Or between the Burton representing the East India Company, stationed in Sindh to supervise its annexation, and the same man mandated by the Royal Geographical Society, nomadizing through the Arabian sands?

And what about the postures dictated by the haunting ghost of a preceding explorer, and more crucially still, of a preceding exploration *text*? Like any

other narrative, an explorer's account inevitably quotes from various other texts, thus gaining consistency through internal 'dialogism', or 'inter-textuality'.⁴¹ We do need to wonder whether the intertextual postures inherent in *any* situation of enunciation were not equally overdetermining in the production of various Self–Other differential systems. Drake and Raleigh were keen to dissociate their accounts from earlier Spanish and Portuguese – and therefore Catholic – narratives; Cook's apprehension of the Polynesians' 'thievish' tendencies was informed by Wallis's log; Tod's understanding of Rajasthan's laws and customs was determined by his knowledge of the European feudal system of land ownership; Stanley's ideological recuperation of Africa's economic potential largely drew on biblical prophetic imagery. The Self's relation to the Other is always, so to speak, 'predicted' by a narrative mediation – etymology, prophecy, myth, logbook, journal, treatise, essay, novel, advertisement, etc. – whose relevance is either validated or invalidated by individual field experience and personal (re)inscription. To a certain extent, every explorer-writer may be said to produce him or herself as the effect of an 'anxiety of influence'.

'There is nothing outside the text', deconstructionists argue:⁴² yes, indeed, texts there were, both *before* and *after* the experience of encounter, text upon text therefore, a hyper-intertextuality from which the unpredictability of face-to-face encounter was bound to emerge transfigured. The challenge therefore is to study how the destabilizing presence of otherness transpires all the same, more or less repressed, adulterated, domesticated, accommodated, glorified, in a textual unstable zone poised between the singularity of personal field experience, the individual desire to open unbeaten tracks in the art of description and the more or less limiting awareness of the existence of previous records. As a matter of fact, such tension may be the source of these exploration narratives' enduring power of fascination, perhaps even the source of their surprising *literary* quality. The eighteenth-century incestuous proximity of established writers and supposedly inarticulate explorers – John Hawkesworth's rewritings of several Commanders' logbooks, George Keate's re-elaboration of Captain Wilson's reports of his amicable relations with the Palauan inhabitants in the Western part of the Pacific Ocean – should not divert our attention from the obvious fact: all reports – log entries, journals, retrospective narratives, fictional reelaborations – were *narratives*, complex fabrics of lexicon, viewpoint, trope, quotation, elision, temporality, plot. Exploration accounts, as well as ethnographic descriptions or anthropological studies, were, and still are, *literary artefacts*.

The book was initially composed as a succession of 'case studies' arranged chronologically. It seemed this basic principle of consecutive chapters was perfectly adapted to the philosophy of a volume whose ambition was to demonstrate that field experience, whatever the historical period or geographical location, could only yield undetermined responses which therefore required specific case

studies. But objection could be made that such a structuring device could prove an unreliable tool in colonial and postcolonial studies. The possibility of formatting the whole enterprise according to thematic units, which could be called 'chapters', uniting individual essays irrespective of historical context, was then seriously considered. Transhistorical affinities and similarities between the individual narratives of highly different personalities, in widely different contexts, could indeed be emphasized: instances of such affinities were to be perceived even between Mandeville and Stanley, whose narratives definitely seek to submit the not-Self to an ambivalent process of 'othering' and 'saming'; Lawson's 'prospective vision' of Carolina anticipates Stanley's capitalist gaze; Clapperton's universalizing perspective on the Africans could be placed alongside a number of eighteenth-century narratives, and his treatment of the theme of 'wonder' might even invite comparison with Drake's; cases of mimicry, linguistic or behavioural, may bring Raleigh and Burton into unexpected proximity, and so forth. Once ascertained, this continuity in discontinuity could easily delineate a number of recurrent modalities of encounter, entailing a limited number of chapters bearing alluring titles such as 'Inventing the Other', 'Domesticating the Other', 'Fictionalizing the Other', 'Destabilizing the Self', etc.

The major risk involved was of course decontextualization. There is indeed a cultural continuity between medieval and Renaissance narratives which ceases to exist in the course of the eighteenth century, when empiricism and nationalism radically redefine the coordinates of identities; and Darwin's revolutionary theories in the second half of the nineteenth century, together with the social, economic and political upheavals generated by a triumphant imperialist system, undisputably redefine the British explorer's conception of Self and Other. One is forced to admit, come to that, that more could have been achieved in articulating the formation of imperial narratives on Britain's shifting politics of intersubjectivity: for example, it is unquestionably the case that there were times when religious, political or commercial motivations were granted priority over genuine curiosity or cognitive ambitions, depending on the situation abroad or at home as well as on the intellectual climate of the day. Still, what case studies establish is the extreme variety of individual responses to specific situations: the official instructions – which most of the time accompanied the explorers to the ends of the earth – recommending 'intercourse' with the Other, could be interpreted with a certain degree of freedom once in context, as even eighteenth-century natural historians and anthropologists could adopt diverging postures regarding their objects of observation; and throughout the nineteenth century, the growing popularization of 'developmental' then 'evolutionary' theories helped reaffirm cultural hierarchies as much as it encouraged cultural relativism.

The structure of the book seeks therefore to steer a middle course between the purely successive and the purely thematic. By grouping various essays inside chapters dealing with historical periods, the book emphasizes the inevitability of historicization; by choosing general headings for such chapters, each offering a thematic thread to pursue through the case studies, it also underlines the profound unity linking the various exploration narratives within a specific cultural context.

In the first chapter, 'Fantasy, Wonder and Mimicry: Proto-Ethnography from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance', Kofi Campbell examines the most important Middle English travelogue, *The Book of John Mandeville* and focuses on two encounters in particular: Mandeville's meetings with a Muslim Sultan, and his observations on the cultures of Africa. In both cases, the author's descriptions were meant to function as enticements to colonization. Campbell argues this was accomplished through the confluence of two seemingly opposite rhetorical practices. By stressing the otherness of the Muslims and Africans, the author constructed them as dangerous people who needed to be contained. At the same time, by focusing on their fleeting similarities, he also suggested that they were similar enough, and that they therefore could be made more culturally like his audience. Indeed, he even calls for their conversion. The next essay broadens the perspective. Starting from a brief study of the process of naming in the medieval period, Nicholas Myers and Ladan Niayesh argue that during the Renaissance names corresponded to fantasmatic archetypes arising from the inner mental and cultural landscape of the West, a landscape which European explorers went in search of – and, inevitably, 'found'. Cannibalism was thus assumed to characterize the primitives, and the assumption became its own proof. Niayesh and Myers go on to argue that, as in John Nicholl's *Hourglasse of Indian Newes* (1607), the designation of the Other involved the use of book titles whose function was in fact to project fantasies of fascination and horror; in Richard Jobson's *Discovery of the River Gambia* (1623), which conceived of itself as a genuine attempt at proto-ethnography, naming became part of a trial-and-error hermeneutics of culture in which appellation, serving the purpose of ideological 'interpellation', supplanted or partly eclipsed ethnographic knowledge. All such approximations are recuperated within the providentialist framework, the naming of the Other turning out to be a (re)claiming of the territory of the Self.

Sophie Lemercier-Goddard then focuses on *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake*, which rehearses the first English circumnavigation in history (1577–80), and shows how a Pirate's venture is transformed into a 'famous voyage' of discovery by emphasizing the importance of 'wonder', not so much before new lands or unknown passages as before other human beings. A close reading of the text shows that Drake's rhetoric of the body is an essential ingredient of the wonderful, as the English develop a form of discourse based on the

use of visual signs, of objects and dumb shows, and as they participate in an Indian ceremony to change it and interpret it according to their own interests. Lemerancier-Goddard analyses how it is in fact a pantomime which enables the Westerners to 'translate', that is to say to take possession of, the land. Line Cottegnies focuses her analysis on Sir Walter Raleigh's *Discovery of Guiana* (1595). Her study reveals that though Raleigh's account was inevitably informed by the topoi and myths elaborated through a tradition of 'fantastic ethnography', and though it reflected a detailed knowledge of previous travellers' accounts, it also evinced Raleigh's desire for a genuine dialogical encounter with native societies. But 'Waterali' seemed to be aware of the necessarily ambivalent nature of his enterprise. By focusing on the linguistic aspects of the encounter, on the question of communication and misinterpretation, Cottegnies manages to show that Raleigh's descriptions of scenes of first encounter involved in fact a mutual form of colonial 'mimicry'.

In the second chapter, 'Distance in Question: Translating the Other in the Eighteenth Century', Robert Sayre takes us to the east coast of North America at the dawn of the eighteenth century. In late December 1700, John Lawson and a group of nine Englishmen and Native Americans set off on a two-month trek into the Carolina backcountry. Lawson, who was in close contact with twenty Indian tribes, had then no other option but to rely on native translators to communicate with his hosts. Sayre places *A New Voyage to Carolina* (1709) within the tradition of accounts of travel in North American Indian territory, before he analyses the dynamics of domestication of the Indian 'Other' within the text. Lawson's narrative of encounter ultimately pictures a highly 'unstable zone', since a process of destabilization of certainties is enacted, leading ultimately to a partial and contradictory recognition of the specificity and value of the Other.

Of course the eighteenth century was the age of unprecedented systematic maritime exploration. Commander Samuel Wallis was the first Englishman to come across what is known today as the Polynesian archipelagos, specifically Tahiti (1767). His log has rarely been studied whereas his journal, written once back in England has attracted more critical attention (neither has been published). Considering the log to be the primordial written representation attesting to the very first encounter between the British and the Tahitians, Sandhya Patel proposes a comparison between the Wallis log and the Wallis journal which brings to light how the process of representation of Self and Other in the log cultivates ambivalence, while the journal seems to be intent on posting clearer markers for future colonization. Patel thus comes to the conclusion that the log's rendition of first encounters may be read as a site of uncertainty where the politics of encounter is shaped in a telegraphic but perhaps more accurate form. The journal of Cook's first voyage to Tahiti and New Zealand was published only a few years later by Hawkesworth (1773), containing not only Cook's descrip-

tion of new, as yet uncharted, territories but also his relation of the more or less successful attempts of the British at establishing links with indigenous populations – as were the Admiralty's explicit instructions. Anne Dromart shows how difficult it seems to have been for all actors in the field to know how close or how distant to each other the British and the islanders wanted, or needed, to be. Focusing her reading on aspects of communication and territoriality, but also on the metaphors and grammatical structures of Hawkesworth's narrative, Dromart perceives this trouble to have been generated by the Europeans' growing awareness of issues of *cultural* difference. Christian Moser then argues that in the late eighteenth century a shift had occurred in the European discourse of exploration. By comparing Cook's writings with those of the Anglo-German scientist Georg Forster, who accompanied Cook on his second voyage to the South Pacific and published his own account of the expedition, *A Voyage around the World* (1777), Moser relates Forster's mode of exploration to the emergent bourgeois practice of walking and analyses its implications for the negotiation between Self and Other in first-contact situations. Cook's descriptive labour depends on maintaining an outsider's position, using the ship as a mobile home that allows the explorer to extricate himself from his involvement in the foreign culture. Forster, for his part, attempts to integrate his observations of *how* he procured his information, thus opposing the off-shore practice of natural history and the inland practice of anthropology.

The close of the eighteenth century inaugurated the age of Empire. By the early 1800s several companies had established trading posts and forts across North America, where fur and copper were to be found in seemingly unlimited abundance. The mythical Northwest Passage – which could provide a water route to the trading markets of the Orient – became of crucial importance. Prominent among the explorers' narratives whose overt purpose was the expansion of the territory and trade interests of the British Empire were Samuel Hearne's *A Journey from Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean* (1795) and Alexander Mackenzie's *Voyages from Montreal on the River St. Laurence, through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans* (1801). Cheryl Cundell's comparative study demonstrates that the two narratives reflected in fact opposite attitudes to empiricism, natural history and anthropology. She argues that these opposite interpretations of the same method entailed profoundly differing perceptual modes, which speak through the nature of the observations emphasized in each text, and inevitably shape the explorers' textual constructions of Self and Other.

In the third, final and longest chapter, 'Stereotypes Undermined: Shifting the Self in the Nineteenth Century', the authors focus on the growing unease which seems to have assailed a significant number of British explorers' narratives, even among the staunchest and most aggressive supporters of England's 'mission'. A

perfect example of this is to be found in the continuation of Hearne's, Mackenzie's and Ross's vain efforts to find the Northwest Passage. In the 1820s, England sought to preserve the position of European leader which it had carved for itself during the war against Napoleon. Russia had to be beaten at its own game, and supremacy now urgently demanded that Britain should at long last discover the Passage. Hence the expedition led by John Franklin which he describes in his *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea* (1823). According to Catherine Lanone, the journal of the expedition questions the very concept of exploration, raising the problem of its ideological constructs, hermeneutic codes and ontological modes. As food becomes scarce and pain increases, Franklin's journal seems to relate an initiatory journey, complete with trials and hardships. Meeting the Other then becomes a twofold process: initially casting the Indians as inferior beings whose function is to serve and obey, Franklin is gradually forced to grant them a greater presence, notably when they come to the rescue of the starving survivors of the expedition. Lanone pinpoints various slips and gaps in Franklin's narrative, which she reads as symptoms of the collapse of stereotypes of Self and Other. The slave trade, gold and ivory, were other powerful lures for the Empire, whose arms reached therefore towards much warmer sub-Saharan latitudes. But even if British explorers were less in need of indigenous assistance than in the Arctic regions, it seems harsh polarization was not necessarily in order in their narratives. Anne-Pascale Bruneau argues that Hugh Clapperton's account of his second expedition into West Africa offers a surprisingly favourable portrait of Africans. Clapperton's *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa* (1829), a compilation of various documents that survived Clapperton's death by dysentery in 1827, is informed by a universalizing and broadly sympathetic outlook, which seems at times to be inherited from the eighteenth century. Through an analysis of the various forms of non-verbal exchanges reported by Clapperton, Bruneau brings to light the presence of codes underlying first encounters, and relates them to the existence of previous forms of commercial contact between Europeans and Africans, of which the journal itself provides evidence. More importantly still, her study focuses on how both the British and the Africans construct politically useful self-representations, and suggests that, in its textual representations of these encounters, Clapperton's journal tends rather to minimize than to emphasize the distinctions between Self and Other.

The crowning jewel of the British Empire, needless to say, was the Raj. James Tod was one of its major early architects. In 1799, he went to India as a cadet in the Bengal army of the East India Company, and in 1818 was appointed political agent for the states of western Rajputana. But Tod was also an extraordinary scholar, whose *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829–32) laid the foundation of the systematic study of Rajasthan's history and culture. Florence D'Souza

shows how this formidable Orientalist accepted the help of Indian scholars, participated in local rituals and compared the nature of Rajput attachment to their ancestral lands with feudal or allodial systems of land ownership in medieval Europe. Tod also tried to render versions of Rajput history intelligible for his European readership, without failing to note Rajput moral, artistic and scientific advancement, to his superiors' great dismay and embarrassment. Another source of imperial 'trouble' from within was the presence of women explorers. Anna Jameson travelled to Upper Canada to join her estranged husband, and according to Jennifer Scott it is precisely through Jameson's liminal position in her marital status, her uncertain fate as a potential Upper-Canadian resident, and her wavering loyalty to the colonial project, that *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* (1838) reveals fissures in the woman explorer's sense of national identity. Jameson describes moments of 'first contact' with the Native Canadians as well as the Upper-Canadian landscape using the already-politicized language of the picturesque with a view to domesticating otherness. But her portraits of individual Indians, the personal relationships that transpire through such 'sketches', together with the impetus to communicate cultural difference to her British readership, also demonstrate Jameson's willingness to acknowledge the complexity of Upper-Canadian oral culture. As a consequence, her journal seems to work towards an uneasy balance between national loyalty, feminism and a defence of racial equality.

At home a major cultural event reshuffled the cards of the game of differentiation. Those were the days of the gradual seeping in of evolutionary theories. Two decades before the official publication of *The Origin of Species* (1859), Charles Darwin had laid the foundations for his future theory during his circumnavigation of the globe (1831–6), not only by collecting specimens of exotic fauna and flora, but also by exposing his epistemological preconceptions to destabilizing contact with peoples on different 'rungs' of civilization. In particular the voyage to Patagonia (1832) proved a journey into the past, in which the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego were cast as the fossilized remnants of an older, primitive stage of humanity. At the same time, the border between the civilized and the savage state of mankind proved to be precarious, as was demonstrated by the story of Jemmy Button and other 'Anglicized' Fuegians, returning on the *Beagle* to their native country and swiftly relapsing to their former 'savage' stage. Virginia Richter addresses two aspects of Darwin's encounter with the Patagonians: firstly, the concepts – such as ideas of scientific observation, discovery, civilization and racial difference – that have a bearing on his descriptions of the 'Other'; secondly, the textual strategies coming into play in the two versions of his travel report, the private diary and the public – and highly successful – narrative of his *Voyage on the Beagle* (1839). Another formidable figure of the mid-century was Richard Burton, explorer, soldier, Orientalist, ethnologist, linguist, diplomat

and poet, one of the most fascinating characters ever produced by the East India Company, which had posted the young man to Sindh, one of the four provinces of today's Pakistan, where Burton lived with the Muslims and learned several Eastern languages and dialects. In 1853, Burton famously travelled incognito to the forbidden holy cities of Medina and Mecca disguised as a pilgrim. My contribution to the volume consists in putting Burton's *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage* (1855–6) into perspective by reading it alongside with his first book, *Sindh* (1851), and a short autobiographical sketch written at approximately the same time and appended as a postscript to *Falconry in the Valley of the Indus* (1852). I argue that what is fascinating about Burton's early, pre-African texts is that they never entirely manage to portray him as a fully reliable authority holding a statutory position and marking hierarchical differences between Self and Other. With Burton, the imperialist programme is in fact both implemented and undermined, as the explorer-ethnographer becomes aware of the linguistic postures implied by the situations of interlocution in which his adventures place him. Burton thus constructs a hybrid image of himself, blurring the demarcation line not only between the Westerner and the Oriental, but also between real and fantasized life, or between being and writing, breaking down the boundaries between ethnographic description and literary self-refashioning.

The volume closes on a notoriously controversial figure, Henry Morton Stanley, whose published work also closes the century. A major icon of American journalism as well as of British imperial heroism, muscular Christianity and late-Victorian masculinity, Stanley mapped large areas of Central and Eastern Africa and solved some of the continent's geographical enigmas, but was also involved in horrific crimes in the Congo. Focusing on the conspicuous textuality of Stanley's three major narratives of exploration, published between 1872 and 1890, Nicoletta Brazzelli argues that Stanley's reports in fact implicitly sought to construct Africa as a stage where he could refashion himself into a British national hero, which induced him to represent Africa as a place of darkness and savagery. The trope of the 'monarch-of-all-I-survey' then transforms the explorer into the God-like creator of an imaginary Africa turned into a utopian object of future exploitation and consumption. Simultaneously, however, the representation of African space provides Stanley's readers with a glimpse into the origins of civilization and the laws of evolution, which even in his case implies a redefinition of the borders between Self and Other.